

THE  
**CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE,**

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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FOR 1813.

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"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE." ST. PAUL.  
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## CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

<i>No. 1.</i>	<i>p.</i>	<i>No. 3.</i>	<i>p.</i>
Christian Disciple introduced	1	The efficacy of religion, as	
Sketch of the character of the		contrasted with infidelity at	
late Rev. Dr. Eliot	7	the hour of death	65
Address to christians on fam-		Thoughts on the sovereignty	
ily religion	9	of God, &c.	69
Illustrations of scripture	13	Extract from the farewell ad-	
On humility in the investiga-		dress of Rev. J. Robinson	73
tion of christian truth	17	Reasons for introducing ex-	
Extract from Tennant's In-		tracts from authors of dif-	
dian Recreations	23	ferent sects	76
<i>Review.</i>		Dr. Campbell on systematic	
Newcome's observations, &c.	27	theology	79
<i>Anecdotes.</i>		Illustrations of passages of	
Of an Italian bishop	30	scripture	80
Of one of the united brethren	31	On the terms of communion	
<i>Poetry.</i>		among christians	85
Divine love	31	On humility in the investiga-	
<i>Intelligence.</i>		tion of christian truth	89
Massachusetts society for the		<i>Intelligence.</i>	
suppression of intemperance	32	Annual report of the execu-	
Notice	32	tive committee of the soci-	
Candidates for the ministry	32	ety for the religious and	
		moral improvement of sea-	
		men	94
		Editorial notice	96
<i>No. 2.</i>		<i>No. 4.</i>	
Obligations of christians to		Sketch of the life and charac-	
love one another	33	ter of Rev. John Howe	97
Extract from the life of Dr.		On the sovereignty of God	103
Doddridge	39	Noneconformity to this world	106
Address to the Editor	43	Dr. Campbell on mystery	109
Extract from Dr. Price's dis-		Illustrations of passages of	
sertation on prayer	46	scripture	112
On mistakes of the terms of		On doxologies	115
acceptance with God	49	On humility in the investiga-	
Illustrations of scripture	53	tion of christian truth	118
On humility in the investiga-		Extracts from "Christian Mo-	
tion of christian truth	56	rals, by Hannah More"	123
Heresy	60	<i>Poetry.</i>	
Christian charity	61	Self-dedication	124
Instructive anecdotes	61	<i>Intelligence.</i>	
<i>Poetry.</i>		Massachusetts bible society	125
The death of the righteous	62	Ordination	128
<i>Intelligence.</i>		Candidates for the ministry	128
Napoleon and Pope	62		
Letter from India	63		
Editorial notice	64		

# CONTENTS.

<i>No. 5.</i>		<i>Poetry.</i>	
	<i>p.</i>		<i>p.</i>
Sketch of the life and character of Rev. John Howe	129	The Lord's prayer	188
Extract from R. Robinson	134	God the refuge of the afflicted	188
Consolation for pious parents on the death of children	134	<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Well-timed reproof	137	Project for an Asylum Bank	188
Dr. Campbell on blasphemy	137	Sunday school union	190
Remarks on the extract from Dr. Campbell	139	Ordination	192
Extract from Dr. Kendal's century sermon	141	Society for promoting christian knowledge	192
Agency and grace of God, &c. consistent with the efficacy of means	142	Foreign missions	192
Conversion of a Jew	146	Candidates for the ministry	192
Illustrations of scripture	148	<i>No. 7.</i>	
Anecdote of Boerhaave	152	Sketch of Rev. T. Hooker	193
Anecdote of Lady Stormont	153	Tests of religious sincerity	195
Saving faith in Jesus Christ	153	Terms of admission to christian privileges	196
Imperfections consistent with sincerity	156	Jones' illustrations	201
<i>Poetry.</i>		Benevolent efforts of quakers	202
God the giver of every blessing	159	On "the Spirit of God"	206
Hymn	159	Illustrations of scripture	210
<i>Intelligence.</i>		Attempt to correct an error	213
Letter from a Moravian missionary	159	Monuments at Jerusalem	215
Proprietors' notice	160	<i>Review.</i>	
Candidates for the ministry	160	Abbot's sermons to mariners	217
<i>No. 6.</i>		<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Sketch of Rev. John Howe	161	Conversion of learned Jews	219
Reflections on Do.	164	British & foreign B. society	221
Of schism, by Dr. Campbell	167	Bible society at Nassau Hall	222
Confession of Rousseau	170	Report of trustees of the evangelical missionary society	223
Illustrations of scripture	171	Love to enemies	224
Account of a religious soldier	175	Obituary, Mr. Charles Eliot	224
On the phrase "the Spirit of God"	178	Candidates for the ministry	224
Fundamental doctrines of christianity	180	<i>No. 8.</i>	
Benevolent efforts of quakers	181	Occasional reflections	225
Remarks on Judah's speech	183	Monuments at Jerusalem	225
Admonition to heads of families	185	Extracts from a sermon, &c.	230
Confession of Chubb	186	Serious preaching	233
Impressive extracts	186	The christian character	237
		Illustrations of scripture	240
		Account of Lieut. Gamage	245
		Spanish inquisition abolished	248
		Poetry	254
		<i>Intelligence.</i>	
		Note to the report, p. 223	254
		Abstract of foreign articles	255
		Obituary, Hon. T. Parsons	256

## PROPOSAL

### For publishing a new Evangelical Work.

THE friends of piety and virtue, of christian truth and christian charity, are respectfully desired to afford their aid and patronage to a Periodical Work, about to be commenced, under the title of

### The Christian Disciple.

#### PROSPECTUS.

PERHAPS it will be thought, that sufficiently numerous attempts have been made to establish and support similar publications. But the gentlemen, who have formed the plan of the Christian Disciple, are impressed with the belief, that no work agreeing with this in spirit and design has as yet been proposed, and they trust that its claims will not hastily be dismissed. They wish to furnish the great mass of Christians with a work adapted to their circumstances and wants; a work which will gratify as well as instruct; and which especially will be suited to imbue them at once with knowledge, and with love; to give them at the same time a zeal for truth, and a spirit of charity and forbearance towards one another. The Christian Disciple is designed to render Christians more fervent in their devotions, and more affectionate in their tempers; to exhibit and recommend true Christianity, that pure and mild religion, which raises the heart to God, and disarms it of all asperity towards its fellow-beings.

To be more particular, the objects of the proposed work are these—to increase the zeal and seriousness of Christians—to discriminate between true and false religion—to excite attention to the Scriptures, and to encourage inquiry into divine truth, unbiassed and unawed by human authority—to furnish that information relat-

ing to the times in which the Scriptures were written, which will enable common Christians to be their own expositors, or to estimate correctly the expositions of others—to cultivate a spirit of candor, forbearance, and love towards persons of different sentiments—to counteract all efforts for enslaving the minds and consciences of men—In a word, to promote at once a generous independence of sentiment and a spirit of Christian humility and conciliation.

To accomplish these various objects, the work will contain—

First—*Essays on Practical Piety; Expositions, Admonitions and Consolatory Addresses*, suited to the various wants and trials of the Christian course; and *Biographical Sketches*, exhibiting the power of religion in real life.

Secondly—*Critical Dissertations*, explaining important words and difficult passages of Scripture; and showing the occasions on which the different books were written, and the objects of the writers. Communications on the *manners, customs, state of society, &c.* referred to in the Scriptures, and *Discussions* written in a candid spirit on the doctrines which have divided the Christian world.

Thirdly—*Dissertations on Church Government*, and on the rights of Christians; and *Historical Extracts* relating to controversies and dissensions in the Church, to Ecclesiastical Com-

cils and their effects, and to other topics interesting at the present times.

The proposed work will also contain accounts of popular works on religion, and such *intelligence* respecting the religious state of the world, as will interest and gratify pious minds.

Such is a general outline of the work; and will any one say, that such a work is rendered unnecessary by other publications, devoted to the same important ends? It is a melancholy fact, which many Christians have felt, that periodical works, of religious character, are too often the vehicles of party-spirit, the instruments of infusing bad passions and of severing the bonds of Christian unity. Their tendency too often is, to contract, rather than to enlarge the heart—to fix the attention on a few disconnected texts; rather than to give extensive views of the Scripture—to make *zealots* and *sectaries*, rather than teachable disciples of Jesus Christ. The Christian Disciple, it is hoped, will help to soften the violence of party, to discourage an unhal- lowed zeal, and to recommend the only standard which *can* unite the Christian world—not a formulary of man's invention, but the word of God, delivered by his prophets, and especially by his beloved Son.

But to promote a candid spirit is not the only object of those who have formed the plan of the proposed work. They trust that this work will aid the interests of *truth*, that it will improve and enlarge the conceptions of Christians on the great doctrines of Christianity. This they hope to accomplish *not* by repeating with clamorous positiveness their own particular views of religion, and by denouncing as the enemies of God and man all who dissent from them. They do not offer themselves as infallible guides. They feel, and they rejoice, that they are not entrusted with the thunders of the Almighty. Whilst they attach importance to their own views of religion, they are aware of their participation of the common weaknesses of human nature; and, where they differ from men whose wisdom and piety they are compelled to revere, they dare not demand implicit acquiescence in their own de-

cisions. They hope to promote the cause of truth not merely by exhibiting their own interpretations of Scripture, but by awakening a spirit of inquiry, and by presenting the researches of other minds. They invite communications from all who are laboring to correct and purify their views of *Christian truth*, and they hope to derive light from the thoughts of those with whom, on some topics, they cannot agree.

They do not, however, wish it to be inferred from these remarks, that they intend to give a controversial character to the work. One of their leading objects is to enforce those great truths in which Christians generally unite; and it will be their highest pleasure to exhibit those simple and affecting views of the Gospel by which all the disciples of our common Master may be edified, and to furnish that information and those helps for the understanding of Scripture, by which all Christians may be improved.

An important object of this work, which ought not to be passed over without particular notice, is *the promotion of a serious and devout spirit* in the professors of Christianity. The reproach has often been thrown on those who urge most strenuously the importance of charity, that they are destitute of vital piety. To this reproach it would be easy to oppose examples of ardent devotion and splendid virtue in that class of Christians. But, in many cases, the charge of lukewarmness and indifference is too well supported. Would to God! there were any denomination of Christians from whom the same humiliating confession might not be extorted. It will be the object of the Christian Disciple to rouse professors from their slumbers, to breathe into them a spirit of mild but earnest devotion, to open at once their understandings and their hearts to the excellence, the goodness and the authority of God, and to the love of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood for their redemption. It will be the object of this work to encourage the religion of the heart, the religion of the closet, and, yet more, that "pure and undefiled religion," which honours

## Prospectus.

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God by a useful and temperate life, "which visits the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions, and keeps itself unspotted from the world." Without inspiring a slavish fear, the Christian Disciple will endeavour to promote that watchfulness, that seriousness and that self-inspection, which belong to creatures so frail and tempted as we are. It will aim to form that habit, without which all other means are ineffectual, of daily prayer to the God of all grace; the source of all pure and generous affections, who giveth liberally, to them that ask, his Holy Spirit.

We trust that the work now proposed will be acceptable to the great mass of Christians, who have not time for laborious researches and connected volumes, but who can easily find time for the short and varied communications which will fill the pages of the Christian Disciple. For them this work is peculiarly designed. To the man of business, released from the cares and tumults of the day—to the husbandman and mechanic, resting from their toils—the Christian Disciple offers its plain instructions, its friendly admonitions, its consolations in

sorrow, and its aid in the great work of preparation for immortality.

Perhaps it may be thought, that in times so difficult as the present, it is presumptuous to expect encouragement for a new publication. But this objection is obviated, in a great degree, by the cheapness of the present work. Besides, the difficulties of our situation and the tremendous convulsions of the world are suited to produce a reflecting, serious state of mind, peculiarly favorable to religious impressions. Never were the truths and promises of Christianity more necessary than at the present time; and it is believed, that, at this moment, the public mind is more than ordinarily alive on the subject of religion.

In conclusion, the prayers of Christians are desired for the *divine blessing* upon a work which is designed to heal divisions, to allay animosities, to extend the knowledge of the Scriptures, to maintain the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and to form the hearts of men to benevolence and devotion, as preparatory to that improved, happy and immortal life revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Feb. 1813.

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The above is the original Prospectus of the Christian Disciple, excepting the conditions.

The present price of the work to subscribers is \$1,75 per volume, to be paid on the delivery of the sixth Number. Clergymen and other gentlemen, who will procure subscribers and be responsible for eight copies, shall have a ninth gratis, and in the same proportion for a larger number. The aid of all who feel disposed to encourage the work is humbly requested. And all who have neglected to pay up their subscriptions to the present time are desired to make immediate payment.

## Errata.

Hymn, p. 316, verse 1, l. 8, for *lovely* read *lowly*.

Poetry, p. 346, the 3d line of the 2d verse should be read—

"Nor heeds thy warning voice while syrens sing."

## CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

<i>No. 1.</i>	<i>p.</i>	<i>No. 3.</i>	<i>p.</i>
The uncertainty of life	1	Sketch of Mr. Paschal	65
Dying exercises of John Selden	4	Pastoral visits	67
Essay on Scripture	5	Requisite qualifications of a theological Instructor	68
Impressive extracts	8	Pretended nonimportance of revelation illustrated	72
Question answered by our Savior	9	Mediation of the Son of God	72
Attempts to relieve the mind of Christians	11	Incorrect apprehensions of God	75
Illustrations of Scripture	13	History of the Council of Trent	78
Events relating to Jerusalem	16	Illustrations of scripture	80
Expositions solicited	19	John Langhorne	85
Character of Judge Parsons	19	Serious preaching	88
Serious preaching	22	<i>Poetry.</i>	
Letter from one clergyman to another	25	Family of Christ	91
Example of submission	28	Effects of intemperance	92
<i>Poetry.</i>		<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Commencement of the year	28	British Bible society	92
Sentiments of the 3d Psalm	29	Obituary—Mr. Anderson, Dr. Kendall	96
<i>Intelligence.</i>		Ordination—Mr. Everett, Mr. Moore	96
Spanish Inquisition	29	Candidates for the ministry	96
New Publications	32	<i>No. 4</i>	
Ordination.—Mr. Parkman	32	History of the Council of Trent	98
Candidates for the ministry	32	Answer to the Clergyman's Letter	102
<i>No. 2.</i>		Pastoral visits	105
Essay on scripture	33	Church Music	108
Faith delivered to the saints	36	Mediation of the Son of God	110
Apologue	41	John Langhorne	113
On intemperance	42	Illustrations of scripture	117
Mr. Channing's two sermons on infidelity.	44	Incorrect apprehensions of God	120
Dividing point &c.	48	Serious preaching	122
Illustrations of scripture	50	<i>Poetry.</i>	
Warning to unbelievers	54	Death of a godly minister	125
Dr. Campbell on heresy	55	<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Incorrect apprehensions of God	58	Christianity in Asia	126
<i>Poetry.</i>		Obituary.—Dr. Prentiss	128
Lines in a Lady's pocket Book	60	Candidates for the ministry	128
Penitential Hymn	60	<i>No. 5.</i>	
Mercy implored in time of war	61	Religious Experience	129
<i>Intelligence.</i>		Mediation of the Son of God	132
Louisiana—India	61	History of the Council of Trent	135
Duelling	63	Defence of the letter from one clergyman to another	137
Many small donations &c.	64	Parable of the four citizens	140
Ordinations.—Mr. Gannett, and Mr. Whitman	64	Schismatic teaching	141
Candidates for the ministry	64		

# CONTENTS.

Illustrations of scripture	142
Melancthon's advice to his mother	144
On denying our propensities	145
Admonitory hints	149
Character of Dr. Kendal	150
On Gamaliel's advice	152
Serious preaching	154
<i>Poetry.</i>	
For ordination	157
<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Christianity in Asia	157
Society for promoting the gospel &c.	160
Obituary.—Rev. Messrs. White and Forward	160
Ordinations.—Mr. Sewall and Mr. White	160
Candidates for the ministry	160

## No. 6.

Rev. Thomas Spencer.	161
Mutations of orthodoxy and heresy	
No. 1.	166
On denying our propensities	169
Effects of growth in grace	172
History of the Council of Trent	174
Mr. Paschal's 7th Letter &c.	177
Doctrines of the Reformation	180
We can do nothing of ourselves	184
Mistakes in religious experience	187
<i>Poetry.</i> —Hymn	190
<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Letter from Petersburg	190
Bibles for the poor	192
Candidates for the ministry	192

## No. 7.

Dr. Tillotson	193
Illustrations of scripture	197
Death of Dr. Leechman	200
Mr. Paschal's 7th Letter &c.	202
On sacred music	206
History of the Council of Trent	209
<i>Poetry.</i>	
Power of Religion.	212
Charity	212
<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Annual report, Mass. Bible Soc.	213
Report of the society for—seamen	216
Annual meetings	218
On captured Bibles, correspondence, &c.	220
Letter from Bath	224
Obituary.—Judge Sewall	224
Ordination.—Mr. Hilliard	224

## No. 8.

Dr. Tillotson	225
Illustrations of scripture	229
Mr Daniel Sargent jun.	231
Mutations &c. No 2	236
Influence of Bible societies	238
Sacred music	241
Sinfulness of infants	245
<i>Poetry.</i>	
Ode to sickness	250
<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Massachusetts Bible society	252
Dr. Porter's Letter	253
Brit. and For. Bible society	253
Distress in Germany	255
Candidates for the ministry	255

## No. 9.

Mr. William Penn	257
Illustrations of scripture	261
Influence of education	264
Letter from Lisbon	267
The Seekers in India	269
Sabbath day of a Christian	271
Mutations. &c. No 3	273
Superstition of Infidels	275
Inquiries relating to duty	277
Remarkable Inscription	279
<i>Poetry.</i>	
Sunday morning	280
Contentions lamented	281
Effects of vice	282
<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Missions—United Brethren	282
British and For. Bible society	283
Memorable events	284
Report of the Legislature—Sabbath	285
Ordinations.—Mr. Crowell and Mr. Haven	286
Candidates for the ministry	286

## No. 10.

Dr. Prentiss	287
Grotius	289
Illustrations of scripture	291
Social and public worship	293
First church in Mass. colony	296
Review of extraordinary extracts	300
Mistakes of the nature of religion	306
The Slave trade	309
Dr. Parkman's Proposals	312
A serious objection considered	314
<i>Poetry.</i>	
God acknowledged, &c.—	316

# CONTENTS.

Religious Intelligence	317	Fragment Society	351
Candidates for the ministry.	318	Commodore Macdonough	351
Notice to Subscribers	318	Obituary.—Dr. Barnard and Rev. J. L. Abbot	352
<b>No. 11.</b>			
Mr. Lavater	321	<b>No. 12.</b>	
Mutations, &c. No. 4	328	Examination of Lord Cobham	352
Dr. Wickliff	330	The slave trade.	357
On the evils of war	332	Our dependence on God &c.	360
Illustrations of scripture	335	Illustrations of Scripture	365
Dependence on God	338	On the blessings of peace	367
A shocking procession	342	Review—Defence of Christianity	369
Remarkable extracts	343	Great events of the past year	375
Dr. Doddridge on Heresy	245	<i>Poetry.</i>	
<i>Poetry.</i>		Our Savior's last will	378
On religion	346	Christmas Hymn	378
<i>Religious Intelligence.</i>		<i>Intelligence.</i>	
Jews Subscribers to Bible societies	347	The Spanish decree &c.	379
Letter from Dr. Naudi	348	Ferdinand's Memorial	380
— from Dr. Carey	348	Report of Trustees—E. M. Society	381
— from Dr. Marshman	348	Bible Societies—Newark &c.	382
African and Asiatic society	349	Portsmouth society &c.	382
Methodist conference	349	Ordinations	383
Sunday School Union	349	Obituary	383
Strangers' friend Society	349	The timepiece— <i>poetry</i>	384
Yearly meeting of Quakers	349	Candidates	384
Mission of United Brethren	350	New publications	384